

PERC Customer Satisfaction Survey

In the spring of 2006, the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) commissioned a study of customer perceptions. The results indicate moderate satisfaction with PERC services across groups, with union customers reporting somewhat higher ratings across items. Customers reported feeling that PERC provides a valuable service, although they feel that performance is sometimes inconsistent across different staff providing those core services.

"[PERC is] an outstanding resource for state government."

"They have been very helpful in keeping expectations of the members realistic, while attempting to reach and balance the core interests of the parties."

"I appreciate [PERC staff] were very professional and worked very hard help the parties find common ground and resolutions."

Methodology

The survey instrument was developed in collaboration with PERC managers and was designed to measure customer perceptions across the core business areas of the agency: mediation and hearing services. PERC provided lists of customers divided based on interaction with PERC into three groups: employers, unions, and outside consultants.

Survey questions were scaled using seven-point like type scales. The chart to the right illustrates how this type of data should be interpreted.

Surveys were launched by mail, with respondents having the opportunity to complete the survey on-line using a dedicated link. Each potential respondent was contacted by phone at least once to request participation in the survey. Phone numbers that were disconnected or customers who had left their place of employment were removed from the survey population.

6.0 – 7.0	High satisfaction
5.0 – 5.9	Satisfaction
4.0 – 4.9	Moderate satisfaction/ some dissatisfaction
3.0 – 3.9	Dissatisfaction
Below 3.0	High dissatisfaction

Demographics

A total of 1232 potential respondents were sent the survey. Of those, 523 returned the survey for an overall response rate of 42%. The chart to the right breaks down the responses and response rates for each of the three groups. For mailed surveys of this nature, these response rates are quite high, giving the agency confidence in the quality of the overall results. Importantly, each customer group received similar response rates, making no one group more representative of perceptions in its customers than another.

Type of Respondent	# Possible Surveys	# Surveys Received	Response Rate
Employers	629	294	47%
Union	427	159	37%
Consultants	176	70	40%

Employer Respondents

A total of 294 employers returned surveys. Almost 85% of those responses came from administrative or human resource/labor relations managers. More than one-third came from Cities/Towns, with the remaining coming from a variety of agencies and organizations.

Organization/Agency Type	Number of Responses	Percent
School District	33	11.2%
City/Town	105	35.7%
County	39	13.3%
State Agency	43	14.6%
Higher Education	22	7.5%

Union Respondents

A total of 159 union customers returned surveys, with more than 75% being either business representatives or union officer/official. Of the 11 "other" responses, most identified themselves as "board members" or "employees."

Consultants Responses

A total of 70 consultant customers returned surveys. Almost one-fourth were legal counsel for unions, while more than half were legal counsel for employers. An additional 13% identified themselves as consultants for the employers.

Overall Satisfaction

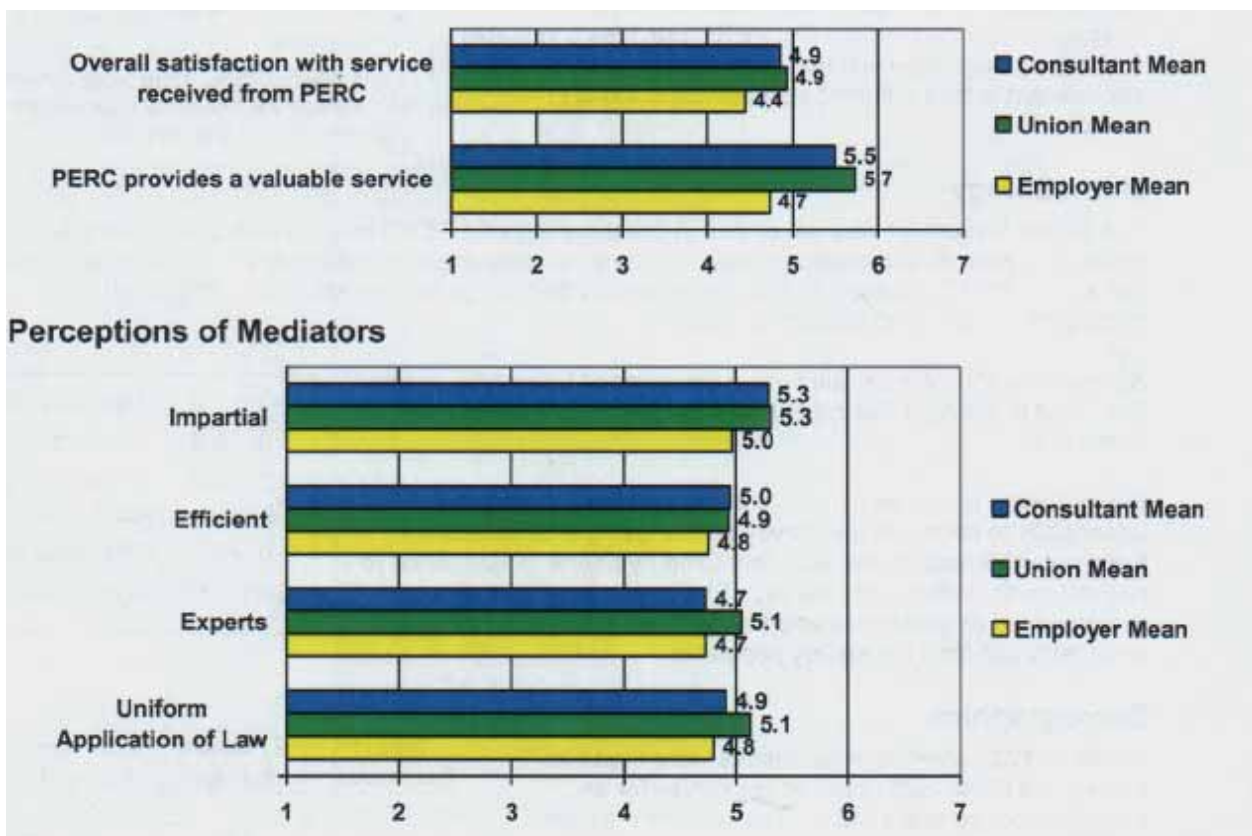
The following charts and tables report the overall perceptions of PERC by the three groups surveyed in this study. As illustrated below, the average responses are similar for union and consultant respondents and somewhat lower for employers. Importantly, while the scores for overall satisfaction are somewhat moderate, they are notably higher for perceptions of the value of the service.

"Invaluable sounding board."

"Very professional organization."

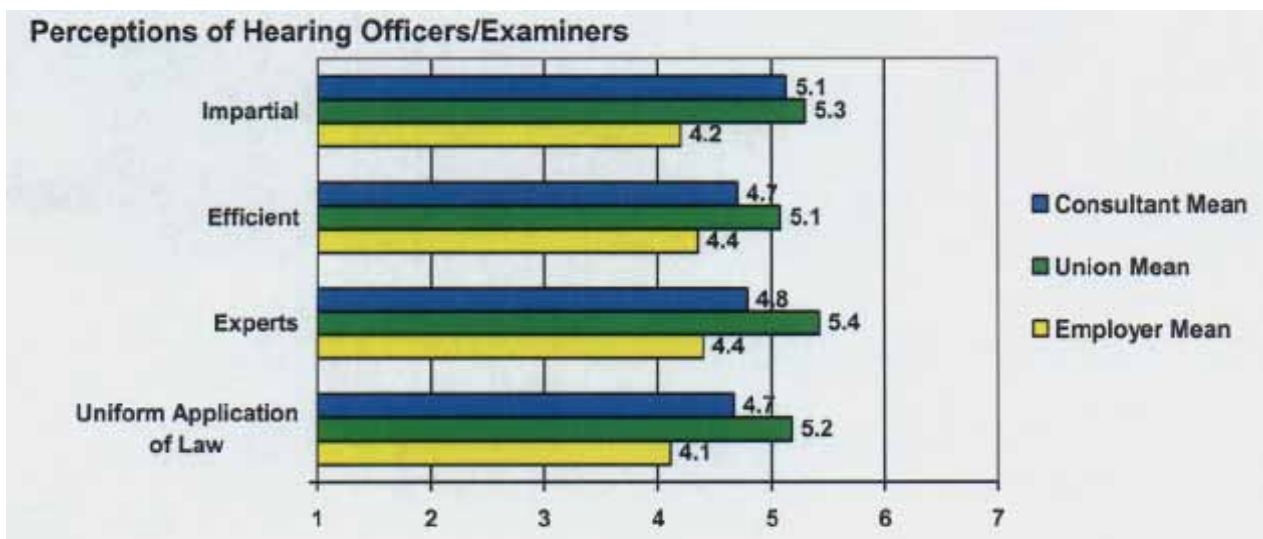
"Overall, I have been satisfied."

"I believe PERC strives to make sure employee interests have been completely protected."



For core value questions, union respondents report moderate responses, but are still more positive than their consultant or employer counterparts. Scores for perceptions of expertise are more moderate than for other questions of the same type.

Overall, perceptions of PERC mediators is somewhat mixed, with union respondents reporting overall more positive perceptions than others. Perceptions of timeliness are moderate, but significantly higher than for hearing examiners. Relative to timeliness, more than 20% of the respondents report dissatisfaction, and just under 10% report extreme dissatisfaction in this area. The most positive ratings across groups are in the perceptions of respectfulness for all parties and overall professionalism; 80% report positive perceptions. For the lowest scored question related to the consistency of mediator quality, more than 25% of respondents reported dissatisfaction, with more than 15% reporting extreme dissatisfaction. These findings are backed up by qualitative comments that expressed frustration with the consistency of mediation services provided by the agency.



For the core value questions related to impartiality, efficiency, expertise, and uniform application of the law, consultant respondents provided moderate responses. Union respondents reported positive responses. Employer respondents reported low moderate responses. However, it is important to note that more than half of all respondents reported positive perceptions in each of these four questions, with only 10-15% of respondents reporting very low ratings in these areas. All respondents report a high perception of professionalism. Perceptions of timeliness are quite a bit lower, with more than 35% reporting dissatisfaction.

Perceptions of Hearing Decisions

- **Representation Hearings:** Respondents report moderate satisfaction with the decisions as a result of representation hearings. Employers report much less satisfaction than do either consultants or union respondents. All three respondent groups report very moderate perceptions of timeliness. Interestingly, consultants and union respondents are much more likely to say that decisions are clear and understandable, unbiased, and reflect a uniform application of the law.
- **Clarification Petition Hearings:** Employer respondents report only moderate satisfaction with the decisions as a result of clarification petitions. While all respondents report very moderate perceptions of the timeliness of decisions, union and consultant respondents report moderate to high satisfaction with the decisions themselves.
- **Unfair Labor Practice Hearings:** Customers are uniformly dissatisfied with the timeliness of decisions as a result of unfair labor practice hearings. While union respondents report higher satisfaction, they also express extreme dissatisfaction with timeliness. Employers report dissatisfaction across decision questions.

Current and Future Use of PERC Services

Asked to evaluate their current use compared to use in the past three years of each of the listed services, respondents largely reported that they have used about the same amount of services. Respondents did report that they use slightly less IBB training services currently than they did three years ago.

Similarly, employer and consultant respondents expect to use about the same amount of services in the next three years as they did in the previous three years. Union respondents report that they will use slightly more services in the next three years than in previous years.